



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar 7th MPAD)

"Stairway to heaven"

Pfc. Christopher Garrett, a saw gunner with Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, provides security in Baghdad's Adhamiyah district Mar. 3. Iraqi Army soldiers and coalition forces targeted a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device cell and conducted presence patrols in the area. (See story page 4)

"White Falcons" and IP's keep the peace in Adhamiyah

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - The two sergeants, one American, one Iraqi, walk side-by-side at the head of the patrol. As they pass an intersection, the American, Sgt. Chris Schupert of Amsterdam, Mo., stops to pull security. The Iraqi sergeant continues walking.

In a few moments, Schupert catches up with him. Pantomiming with his weapon, Schupert explains what to do when they cross danger areas like an inter-

section on patrol.

"We pull security here, and wait for the guy behind to come up," Schupert said to the Iraqi. The Iraqi Sergeant nods in understanding.

At the next crossing the Iraqi Sergeant moves quickly across the road, pausing on the other side to provide cover until Schupert has crossed. After he's relieved, he falls back into step with Schupert, who gives him a grin and a clap on the back.

Helping Iraqi security forces to make these kinds of small, but important improvements is one of the main objec-

tives of combined U.S.-Iraqi patrols. Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd "White Falcons" Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment and Iraqi police officers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division began conducting joint security patrols in Baghdad's Adhamiyah security district last week.

"The intention is to start showing these guys how we do patrols, so they can start doing it on their own," said Sgt. 1st

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Harmony between U.S. and Iraqi troops

Peace

From Page 1

Class Jorge Mazuela, a platoon sergeant and Miami native with Company B, 2-325th AIR.

Under the new security plan, called Operation Fardh Al-Qanoon, the streets of Baghdad are being flooded with Iraqi Army troops, local Baghdad police officers and Iraqi national police. U.S. Forces are conducting combined operations with all three components, but the White Falcons have been conducting the majority of their joint patrols with the national policemen.

In the past, Iraqi national police units functioned like American S.W.A.T. teams, said Staff Sgt. Phillip Cooper, from Oscoda, Mich., a squad leader with Co. B.

"On missions, they would pile into trucks, drive to their objectives, hit their targets, and head home. That all changed with the new security plan," Cooper said. "Now, INP units are being



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Christopher Shupert (right), with Co. B, 2nd Bn., 325th Abn. Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., shares some patrolling techniques with Sgt. Salaam, a squad leader with the 2nd Bn., 8th Bde., 2nd INP Div., during a joint patrol in Baghdad's Adhamiyah security district Feb. 28.

told to patrol the streets on foot."

Pfc. Branigan Kerr, of Los Angeles, a rifleman with Co. B. said the tactics the White Falcons have been demonstrating include movement techniques, procedures to maintain 360-degree security, how to identify people who need to be searched, how to stop cars, and what to look for

when checking a car for bombs, among other things.

The atmosphere before the White Falcons' patrol with police from the 2-8-2 INP was reminiscent of a first day at school. As the paratroopers were paired off with counterparts from the police, there were some awkward, getting-to-know you

moments. But pretty soon the Iraqis and Americans were handling each others' weapons, talking about their kids and cracking jokes with each other.

Once the squads had been integrated, the patrol moved out. The Iraqis were casual at first, some lighting cigarettes or sitting down to rest on halts. But after coaching by the paratroopers, they gradually adjusted their focus. Soon they were taking the lead, stepping out into the streets to halt traffic at road crossings and searching vehicles.

"They're catching on fast," Schupert said when it was over.

Before they split up for the day, the paratroopers and police sat down and reviewed how the patrol had gone.

Then the INP got into pickups and drove off, leaving the paratroopers alone.

Real progress would take time, Sgt 1st Class Mazuela said, and the White Falcons had to be prepared take the time to make it work.

Arabic Phrase of the Day

qusiir

**Defined:
short**

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 75
Low: 48



Tomorrow

High: 79
Low: 50



Saturday

High: 81
Low: 50

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.

Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl

Command Information Supervisor: Master Sgt. Dave Larsen

NCOIC, Print Production: Sgt. Michael Garrett

Editor: Spc. Shea Butler

Staff Writers: Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma, Pfc. Ben Gable, Pfc. William Hatton

Contributing Writers: Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner, Sgt. Mike Pryor

Contact the *Daily Charge* at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil.

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Dust in the Wind: Sandblasted at BRC

Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner
15th SB, Public Affairs

Besimaya Range, Iraq -In the stillness, it's as fine as talcum powder; clouding at the ankles with each foot-fall. Churned and driven by the wind, it becomes legion; stripping exposed skin of moisture and seamlessly working it way into everything: eyes, noses, clothing, weapons; anything in its path.

In a landscape almost void of trees or plants, here at Besimaya Range Complex, dust is king. Troops from Alpha Company, 1/115th Field Artillery, 867th Corps Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade got a taste, literally, of what nature has to offer.

Providing gun truck security to convoys delivering supplies and equipment to the desert outpost the night before, the Soldiers' spent the night next to their vehicles.

"When we went to sleep around 5 am, it was nice and clear", said Specialist David Geisman, a gunner from A, 1/115th. "By 8 am, everything was brown."

With winds blowing around 20 miles per hour, and gusts closer to 30, visibility at times was limited to just inches. Waking up and finding everything he left out covered in a thick layer wasn't exactly the best way to start the day.

"It's your attitude that determines a lot; whether you're going to deal with it", mused the Hattiesburg, Ms. native while shaking out his uniform. "You just keep telling your-

self you'll get a shower in a few days."

Apart from the discomfort of the sandblasting, the dust storm caused additional concern for the men. Their mission called for them to escort the same combat logistics patrol later that evening. Vehicles, weapons and electronics needed to be stripped down and cleaned before departing.

"Nothings gonna go untouched by this", said Spc. Brandon Melber, an armored security vehicle gunner from Clarkville, Tn. "Still, it's not as bad as 2003"; referring to the massive three day dust storm that halted coalition forces on the march to Baghdad.

With other unit members starting the futile task of shaking out embedded layers of earth while the wind still howled, Geisman maintained his positive attitude of mind over matter.

"You can't let it drag you down. You gotta find other things to think about. I just remember that I'm not the only one; I've got all my friends around me...going through the same thing," he said.

As the Soldiers passed around wet wipes to dig the dust out of eyes, noses and ears, Giesman said that at least the situation was a learning experience.

With the high probability of visiting Besimaya in the future, troops will definitely be wrapping up and tying gear down a little better.

"Next time, I'm sleeping in a truck!" he grinned.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner 15th SB Public Affairs)

Dust shrouds an armored security vehicle during a windstorm at the BRC March 5.

Baghdad in Brief

Car bomb kills 22 Iraqis in southern Baghdad

BAGHDAD- Twelve Iraqi National Police and 10 Iraqi civilians were killed in a car bomb attack on a checkpoint in southern Baghdad Mar. 7.

A National police patrol and Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops arrived on scene shortly following the afternoon attack, established checkpoints and began to evacuate an unconfirmed number of wounded to local hospitals. Iraqi emergency service personnel also responded to the scene, extinguishing a fire and assisting with the medical treatment of bystanders injured in the blast.

In addition to the car bomb, three Iraqi national police vehicles were destroyed in the explosion.

The incident is under investigation.

Strykers capture 22, secure ammunition and explosives

KALSU, Iraq - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers detained 22 insurgent suspects and secured weapon and ammunition caches south of Baghdad March 6.

Soldiers of 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division conducted targeted raids to capture known terrorists and secure weapons and ammunition near Jabella, Iraq.

Besides the 22 detainees taken into custody, several caches were found.

The caches consisted of one 60mm mortar round, two sticks of dynamite, nine feet of detonation cord, three blasting caps, one set of desert camouflage uniform, three AK-47 ammunition magazines, three passports, one machine gun barrel, one AK-47 butt stock, two empty ammunition boxes, one box of primers, two AK-47s, six 7.62mm ammunition magazines, one 8mm round, two 8mm mortar fuses, five blasting caps and one rocket-propelled grenade booster.

The suspects are being detained for further questioning.

Strykers sweep through Adhamiyah with Iraqi troops

By Spc. L.B. Edgar
7th MPAD

BAGHDAD - The proper materials have to be acquired then transported. A skilled person has to put the device together before it can be installed inside an automobile and then armed. Finally the vehicle's driver must successfully reach his target and detonate the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

In order to thwart recent car bomb attacks on markets throughout Baghdad, Iraqi security forces and troops from the Multi-National Division - Baghdad are sweeping through Iraq's capital to disrupt VBIED production cells as part of Operation Fardh Al Qanoon.

The Iraqi-conceived operation, commonly known as the Baghdad Security Plan, continued Mar. 3 and 4 as the Soldiers of Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, together with Iraqi Army troops conducted targeted raids and presence patrols in the Adhamiyah security district of Baghdad. The goal was the cessation of car bomb attacks in Baghdad, said Sgt. Todd Selge, a fire team leader.

"How do you stop them? That's what we've been focusing on these last couple of missions because it's the number one prob-

lem," since the implementation of the new security plan, the native of Burnsville, Minn., said.

U.S. and Iraqi troops searched the homes of many Adhamiyah residents. The searches were not only meant to clear the neighborhood of any threats, but also to familiarize the residents with ISF and coalition forces, said Sgt. Brian Mills, a team leader.

The search was also an opportunity for residents to share information. The searches essentially begged the question: "Is there anything we can do to get bad guys out of your neighborhoods?" said Mills, a native of Jackson, Tenn.

In addition, the search allowed residents to provide feedback, said Staff Sgt. David Plush, weapons squad leader.

"They had a good feeling about the IA. They liked the new security plan for Baghdad," said the Riverton, Wyo., native. "It also lets them know we care - we care about what's going on in their neighborhoods (and) we want to do what we can to help them out."

In neighborhoods like Adhamiyah, where fire fights are few and far between, combat arms Soldiers are increasingly interacting with residents, which is something new for many troops primarily trained to engage and destroy the enemy, Plush said.

"We've got to do this to get us home,"



Josh Yundt, a rifleman with Co. A, 5th Bn., 20th Inf. Regt., 3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., clears a building in Baghdad's Adhamiyah district Mar. 3.

said Plush, a veteran of 13 years. "Everything is not always about shooting the bad guys. We're trying to make Iraq a better place."

According to Selge, interacting with the local populace is what needs to happen.

"The more we're out there, the more we're talking to the people, the better the intelligence we're going to get - more people are going to want to talk to us because they see us there," Selge explained. "If you treat them respectfully and talk to them long enough, a lot of times, you will get useful information."

"A lot of our troops are sitting on the FOBs, not doing anything (outside the wire). Support is very important to us, but at the same time, we need more boots on the ground and more people interacting day to day," Selge said. "It just seems like a lot of the troops aren't necessarily out there as often as they should be, doing what they should be (doing)."

Though the amenities of FOBs will not always be accessible for Soldiers securing Baghdad from Joint Security Stations or Combat Outposts, Selge said the sacrifice will pay dividends in terms of improved security and the overall success of the new security plan.



(Photos by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Sgt. Michael Alsip, a team leader with Co. A, 5th Bn., 20th Inf. Regt., 3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., provides security in Baghdad's Adhamiyah district Mar. 3.

Sergeant Major, police commander's son share bond

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - As a sergeant major with years of experience in the Army, Sgt. Maj. Manuel Daponte is used to people being a little intimidated when they approach him. But Mutada Ali, 4, son of Iraqi national police commander Brig. Gen. Ali Ibrahim Daboun, isn't intimidated by much.

"I was sitting in the general's office when Mutada came in. He came right up to me and climbed into my lap," Daponte recalled. "That was the beginning of the friendship."

Since that day, Mutada and Daponte, of Westport, Mass., the senior enlisted U.S. advisor to the 8th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division, have been pretty much inseparable.

As the senior non-commissioned officer in charge of four 11-man U.S. training teams



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Maj. Manuel Daponte, the senior enlisted U.S. advisor to the 8th INP Bde., shares a playful moment with Mutada Ali, 4, the son of the brigade commander, Iraqi Brig. Gen. Ali Ibrahim Daboun, on the streets of Baghdad's Sadr City district March 5.

responsible for advising more than 2,700 Iraqi Army and police personnel, Daponte works closely with Gen Ali, who commands the 8th Brigade of the 2nd Iraqi National Police Division.

Wherever Gen. Ali goes, so

does Mutada.

"He's always stuck with me. He doesn't want to stay home," the general explained with a laugh.

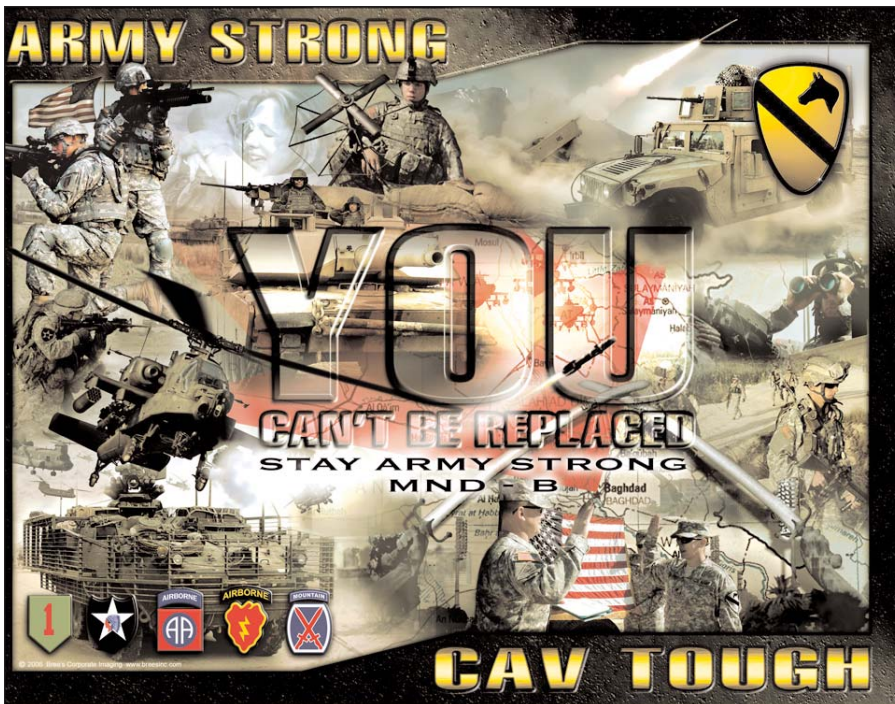
When Ali heads out to watch his forces train or con-

duct operations, Daponte acts as Mutada's battle buddy, watching out for him and keeping him out of trouble.

Mutada even accompanied his father during recent clearing operations in the notorious militia stronghold of Sadr City. Daponte was right beside him for much of the time, helping the boy collect U.S. unit patches from Soldiers and making sure he picked up his candy bar wrappers.

It's an odd sight to see an American sergeant major "babysitting" a mischievous Iraqi boy in the middle of a war zone, but Daponte said the time he spends with Mutada reminds him of what he is fighting for.

"I love kids," he said. "I have two daughters of my own, and to have someone like this come along and remind us that the world is a simpler place outside of war, is a great thing."



OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

If each letter of the alphabet, a through z equal to a number 1 to 26

Then,

K + N + O + W + L + E + D + G + E
 $11 + 14 + 15 + 23 + 12 + 5 + 4 + 7 + 5 = 98\%$

H + A + R + D + W + O + R + K
 $8 + 1 + 18 + 4 + 23 + 15 + 18 + 11 = 98\%$

Both are important, but the total falls just short of 100%.

However,

A + T + T + I + T + U + D + E
 $1 + 20 + 20 + 9 + 20 + 21 + 4 + 5 = 100\%$

Safety really is about attitude

BE SAFE
MAKE IT H